



Biden administration waives 26 federal laws to allow border wall construction in South Texas

By Valerie Gonzalez

Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — The Biden administration announced they waived 26 federal laws in South Texas to allow border wall construction on Wednesday, marking the administration's first use of a sweeping executive power employed often during the Trump presidency.

The Department of Homeland Security posted the announcement on the U.S. Federal Registry with few details outlining the construction in Starr County, Texas, which is part of a busy Border Patrol sector seeing "high illegal entry." According to government data, about 245,000 illegal entries have been recorded in this region during the current fiscal year.

"There is presently an acute and immediate need to

construct physical barriers and roads in the vicinity of the border of the United States in order to prevent unlawful entries into the United States in the project areas," Alejandro Mayorkas, the DHS secretary, stated in the notice.

The Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and Endangered Species Act were some of the federal laws waived by DHS to make way for construction that will use funds from a congressional appropriation in 2019 for border wall construction. The waivers avoid time-consuming reviews and lawsuits challenging violation of environmental laws.

Starr County's hilly ranch-lands, sitting between Zapata and McAllen, Texas, is home to about 65,000 residents sparsely populating about 1,200 square miles



A border wall section stands on July 14, 2021, near La Grulla, Texas, in Starr County. On Wednesday, Oct.

(Delcia Lopez/The Monitor via AP, File)

(3,108 square kilometers) that form part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Although no maps were provided in the announcement, a previous map

shared during the gathering of public comments shows the piecemeal construction will add up to an additional 20 miles to the existing border barrier system in the area. Starr Coun-

ty Judge Eloy Vera said it will start south of the Falcon Dam and go past Salineño, Texas.

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"The other concern that we have is that area is highly erosive. There's a lot of arroyos," Eloy Vera, the county judge said, pointing out the creeks cutting through the ranchland and leading into the river. Concern is shared with environmental advocates who say structures will run through public lands, habitats of endangered plants and species like the Ocelot, a spotted wild cat.

"A plan to build a wall through will bulldoze an impermeable barrier straight through the heart of that habitat. It will stop wildlife migrations dead in their tracks. It will destroy a huge amount of wildlife refuge land. And it's a horrific step backwards for the borderlands," Laiken Jordahl, a southwest conservation advo-

cate for the Center for Biological Diversity, said Wednesday afternoon.

During the Trump administration, about 450 miles of barriers were built along the southwest border between 2017 and January 2021. Texas Governor Greg Abbott renewed those efforts after the Biden administration halted them at the start of his presidency.

The DHS decision on Wednesday contrasts the Biden administration's posturing when a proclamation to end the construction on Jan. 20, 2021 stated, "building a massive wall that spans the entire southern border is not a serious policy solution." U.S. Customs and Border Protection had no immediate comment.

The announcement prompted political debate by the Democratic administration facing an increase of migrants entering through the south-

ern border in recent months, including thousands who entered the U.S. through Eagle Pass at the end of September.

"A border wall is a 14th century solution to a 21st century problem. It will not bolster border security in Starr County," U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar said in a statement. "I continue to stand against the wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars on an ineffective border wall."

Political proponents of the border wall said the waivers should be used as a launching pad for a shift in policy.

"Having made that concession, the administration needs to immediately begin construction of wall across the border to prevent the illegal traffic from simply moving to other areas of the border." □

Top Connecticut state police leaders retiring as investigators probe fake traffic ticket data claims

By Dave Collins
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The top two leaders of Connecticut State Police will be stepping down in the middle of multiple investigations into whether troopers submitted bogus data on thousands of traffic stops that may have never happened, Gov. Ned Lamont said Wednesday.

State public safety Commissioner James Rovella and Col. Stavros Mellekas, commanding officer of state police, will be retiring next month, the Democratic governor said, adding that they were not being forced out.

At a state Capitol news conference, Lamont and Rovella denied the investigations played major roles in the retirements. Mellekas did not attend and did not immediately return an email message seeking comment.

Rovella said he and Lamont discussed his retirement plans Tuesday as well as the investigations into the traffic stop data.

"That wasn't the driving force behind this," Rovella said.

Lamont, who began his second four-year term in January, said, "So every four years I think it's time to have a fresh start, and that's what we're going to do with public safety."

The governor announced his nominee to succeed Rovella is Ronnell Higgins,



Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Commissioner James Rovella, right, appears with Col. Stavros Mellekas, superintendent of the Connecticut State Police, center, and Lt. Col. Mark Davison for a hearing on state troopers providing false traffic stop information on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, in Hartford, Conn.

(AP Photo/File File)

former police chief at Yale University who now serves as the school's associate vice president for public safety and community engagement. Higgins must be confirmed by state lawmakers.

U.S. Department of Justice investigators are looking into whether dozens of troopers falsified information about traffic stops that were never made. There also is an independent investigation ordered by Lamont that is being led by a former federal prosecutor, as well as a U.S. Department of Transportation probe.

The information in question was entered into a database that tracks the race

and ethnicity of drivers stopped by police, under a Connecticut law aimed at preventing racial profiling. Auditors said the alleged false data was more likely to identify motorists as white, which skewed the race and ethnicity data collected to compile state-wide reports. The reports have shown nonetheless that Black and Hispanic drivers are pulled over at disproportionate rates compared with white motorists.

In August, the state police union voted no confidence in both Rovella and Mellekas, accusing them of not defending troopers against allegations involving the traffic stop data.

Rovella was confirmed by state lawmakers in February 2019 to serve as commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, which oversees state police. He's been in law enforcement for four decades, including as a homicide detective and the chief for Hartford police.

Mellekas joined the state police as a trooper in 1994 and worked his way up to become commanding officer in 2019. He previously worked as a police officer at the U.S. Capitol.

An audit released by University of Connecticut data analysts in June found a "high degree of confidence" that troopers sub-

mitted false information on citations for at least 25,966 traffic stops, and possibly more than 58,000 stops, that may have never happened from 2014 to 2021. Auditors said information on those stops could not be found in the state's court system, which handles all traffic violations — leading to the conclusion that data was likely falsified.

Auditors said 130 troopers had "significant disparities" between the number of citations that were sent to the court system and higher numbers entered into the race and ethnicity database. They said a total of 311 troopers had discrepancies in at least one of the years audited.

The data analysts, however, cautioned that they did not try to determine whether the records were intentionally falsified or were wrong due to carelessness or human error.

The Connecticut State Police Union has cautioned against making any conclusions about troopers' conduct before the investigations are complete. It says more than two dozen troopers already have been cleared of wrongdoing in connection with the traffic citation data, and it expects more to be cleared.

Union officials have said many discrepancies found in the audit could be due to recordkeeping or data entry errors. □

Morgan State shooting erupted during dispute but victims were unintended targets, police say

By Lea Skene and Sarah Brumfield

Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — At least two people opened fire during a dispute between two groups at Morgan State University homecoming events Tuesday night, but the five victims were likely not the shooters' intended targets, officials said.

All other homecoming events and classes were canceled for the remainder of the week, including Saturday's football game, university President David Wilson announced late Wednesday afternoon. Wilson said the regrettable decision marked "the very first time in Morgan's history" that such events were canceled. Some students were seen leaving campus with duffel bags and suitcases Wednesday afternoon.

"Today, we unfortunately find ourselves navigating this tragic event during a time at which we should be celebrating," Wilson said in a letter to the university community.

Baltimore Police Commissioner Richard Worley said preliminary evidence indicates the shooters were targeting one person, who wasn't among the victims. All five are expected to survive. Worley said a third person also pulled a gun during the dispute, though it wasn't clear whether they pulled the trigger. He said ballistics testing will reveal how many shooters were ultimately involved.

The updates from police Wednesday morning helped quell rumors circulating online about whether the attack was racially motivated or a planned school shooting on the historically Black university campus in northeast Baltimore.

The shooting unfolded around 9:30 p.m., shortly after a coronation ceremony for this year's Mister and Miss Morgan State in the campus auditorium. Attendees were walking from the auditorium to the student center for a coronation ball, which was about



A police officer searches for evidence in front of a building at Morgan State University after a shooting, Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, in Baltimore.

(AP Photo/Julia Nikhinson)

to begin when gunfire sent people scattering in fear. The gunshot victims — four men and one woman — are between ages 18 and 22. Four are Morgan State students.

No arrests have been made yet.

City police and university officials initially warned students of an active shooter and ordered them to shelter in place for hours while SWAT officers went door to door searching for suspects. Worley said police heard gunshots and several dorm windows shattered, so officials initially thought there was an active shooter and acted accordingly.

On campus Wednesday afternoon, workers were replacing the windows and sweeping up broken glass while students milled about — some commenting on the evolving crime scene, which included blood splatters on a concrete walkway and yellow crime tape crisscrossing the adjacent courtyard. A neon sign at one campus entrance flashed: "Morgan family, Morgan strong."

Emani Jones-Grant, a freshman from New Jersey, said that instead of visiting for homecoming weekend, her family was planning to pick her up Thursday. She said she's enjoying college overall, but the shooting left her and others feeling shaken.

"The vibe is weird," she

said. "A lot of people are talking about leaving for the weekend."

Michelle Newman said she drove down from New York after getting frantic calls from her daughter, a freshman, who was having a panic attack as the shooting unfolded Tuesday night, saying a bullet came through her dorm room window.

"She was hysterical," Newman said. "She called to ask us what she was supposed to do."

Newman said she planned to bring her daughter home where she would feel safe. The chaos of the previous night was still fresh in people's minds.

Jennifer Eden, 34, of Baltimore, attended the coronation ceremony and was headed toward the student center with a friend when shots rang out and people started running.

"I had never been so close to gunshots that I could feel the vibration in the air," Eden said. "Coronation is very much a pomp and circumstance kind of event. People are in gowns and tuxedos and crowns and sashes, and so gun violence is the furthest thing from my mind in that type of setting."

But previous Morgan State homecoming celebrations have also been subject to violence.

During a news conference on campus Wednesday, a

"Unfortunately, individuals respond to campus and act poorly," he said. "Oftentimes you can't stop a bad actor from doing bad acts, but we will continue to try to ensure the safety of our students."

Advocates and local leaders said the shooting highlights the drumbeat of trauma students are experiencing in schools across the country.

"It shouldn't be lost on anyone that this shooting took place during homecoming week for a generation that has been raised on school shooting drills and mass shootings," said Kris Brown, president of Brady, a nationwide group that advocates for stronger gun controls. "Gun violence has been a daily presence for this generation, and it is now following them into adulthood."

"This is not the first time something has happened during homecoming week at Morgan, so there's a lot of soul-searching that I think all of us have to do," Baltimore City Council member Odette Ramos, whose district includes part of Morgan State's campus, said during a council hearing Wednesday afternoon.

"But the issue is also guns," Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott reiterated his demand for Congress to pass substantive gun reform, calling the shooting a "sickening reminder... of how commonplace these incidents have become." □



Morgan State University President David Wilson speaks at a news conference after a shooting on campus, Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, in Baltimore.

(AP Photo/Julia Nikhinson)

Youngkin administration says it's fixing issue that improperly removed some voters from the rolls

By Sarah Rankin
Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Gov. Glenn Youngkin's administration said this week, with early voting underway, that it is working to fix an issue that misclassified probation violations as felonies and has led to an unknown number of eligible Virginians being removed from the voter rolls.

State election officials are working with Virginia State Police to identify voters whose registration "may have been canceled in error" and begin the process of having those people reinstated, Andrea Gaines, a spokeswoman for the Department of Elections, said in a statement Wednesday. "We are taking great care to identify each person affected and working to reinstate their registration immediately," said Susan Beals, commissioner of the Department of Elections. Gaines said that as part of the routine process of keeping an up-to-date voter list, the department receives a monthly file from Virginia State Police containing felony convictions. In Virginia, a felony conviction automatically results in the loss of a person's civil rights, such as the right to vote, serve on a jury, run for office and carry a firearm. The governor has the sole discretion to restore those civil rights, apart from firearm rights, which can be restored by a court.



Gov. Glenn Youngkin, R-Va., speaks to David Rubenstein during an interview hosted by the Economic Club of Washington, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023, in Washington.

(AP Photo/Stephanie Scarbrough)

The elections department, Gaines said, "was recently informed that these files received from VSP may contain probation violation convictions."

The department asked state police to analyze their data to determine who may have been canceled in error.

"Once that data is received, ELECT will send those names to registrars" to have those voters' registrations "reinstated immediately," Gaines' statement said.

Macaulay Porter, a spokeswoman for the Republican governor, said in an emailed statement that once Youngkin's office

"became aware of the inconsistencies regarding the misclassification of probation violations as felonies," the governor asked state police to "correct the process" and ordered a review.

"The Governor is committed to ensuring those that are eligible can vote and those affected will have their registration reinstated," Porter said.

VPM, which first covered the administration's acknowledgement of the issue, previously reported on the case of an Arlington County man who was taken off the voter rolls for a probation violation before being reinstated by a judge.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia also said last week it had received "troubling reports" of Virginians having their voting rights revoked on the basis of technical probation violations, something it called "unprecedented and unconstitutional."

It's the second week of early voting in this year's hotly contested legislative elections. Every General Assembly seat will be on the ballot in an election cycle that will determine party control of the Assembly, which is divided.

Virginia Democrats said the episode was alarming.

"It is unacceptable that we are two weeks into early

voting and the Youngkin administration does not even know how many Virginians they wrongfully purged from the voter rolls," Aaron Mukerjee, who serves as voter protection director for the Democratic Party of Virginia, said in a statement.

The state party chair, Susan Swoecker, called for an investigation into the "weaponized incompetence of the Youngkin administration's Department of Elections."

Victoria LaCivita, a spokeswoman for Republican Attorney General Jason Miyares, said in a statement that the office can't comment on advice it has provided the elections department or state police.

"However, we are confident that the matter is being resolved as quickly as possible," she said.

Corinne Geller, a spokeswoman for the Virginia State Police, said the agency was making changes to the data it provided the Department of Elections.

"At the request of the Virginia Department of Elections, and after consulting with the Office of the Attorney General," Geller said, the monthly Central Criminal Records Exchange report "no longer contains felony probation violation charges to not inadvertently disqualify individuals whose rights were previously restored by the former Governor." □



A nurse practitioner holds a COVID-19 vaccine card at a New York Health and Hospitals vaccine clinic in the Brooklyn borough of New York on Jan. 10, 2021.

(AP Photo/Craig Ruttle, File)

Devi Shastri
Associated Press
(AP) - It's the end of an era for a once-critical pan-

demic document: The ubiquitous white COVID-19 vaccination cards are being phased out.

Say goodbye to the COVID-19 vaccination card. The CDC has stopped printing them

Now that COVID-19 vaccines are not being distributed by the federal government, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stopped printing new cards.

The federal government shipped more than 980 million cards between late 2020, when the first vaccines came out, through May 10, according to the latest available data from

the CDC.

Federal and local health officials don't expect the discontinuation of the cards to be a particularly big change, since the days of keeping them tucked in purses and wallets to ensure entry into festivals, bars and restaurants are largely over. If you've held on to your card, it's still valid as proof of vaccination. Otherwise, people who need

their COVID-19 immunization records will need to request them just like any other vaccine.

Other states don't have the same options, so it might take longer to get your records. There could also be gaps in state databases; for example, if you were vaccinated by a federal health provider, those records may be tracked in a separate system. □

Colombia's government issues long awaited apology for extrajudicial killings during armed conflict

Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) —

Colombia's government issued a long awaited public apology on Tuesday for the extrajudicial killings of 19 civilians who were slain by the military and registered as rebel fighters during one of the most violent periods of the nation's civil war.

The apology comes as Colombia's government attempts to make amends with communities affected by decades of armed conflict and broker peace deals with rebel groups that are still fighting the military in rural areas despite a 2016 peace deal between the government and the nation's largest rebel group.

"These (killings) should have never happened," Defense Minister Iván Velásquez said at an event in front of the nation's congress attended by the victims' relatives.

"We ask you to forgive us for these crimes that embarrass us in front of the world," Velásquez said in a speech. The killings took place between 2004 and 2008 as Colombia's military intensified its campaign against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — the rebel group that made peace with the government in 2016.

The killings involved young



Colombia's Defense Minister Ivan Velasquez, center, stands with the relatives of 19 young people who were falsely presented as guerrillas killed in combat by the Colombian army during the country's internal conflict, during an act of recognition and public apology by the state for their extrajudicial execution, in Bogota, Colombia, Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023.

(AP Photo/Fernando Vergara)

men from poor neighborhoods who were lured away from their homes with false promises of jobs in other parts of the country. Once they arrived at their destinations, the victims were shot by soldiers who dressed their corpses in camouflage, or placed weapons next to their bodies, and presented them to their superiors as rebels killed in combat in order to secure promotions and vacation time.

Courts in Colombia have been ordering the government to apologize for these cases — known here as "false positives" — since 2015, as part of a set of reparations measures which also included prison sentences for some of the soldiers and officers involved. But the administrations of Presidents Juan Manuel Santos and Iván Duque had skirted around the orders to apologize in public because they were reluc-

tant to recognize that during the nation's armed conflict the military committed war crimes that were just as serious as those carried out by rebel groups, said Gimena Sanchez, a Colombia expert at the Washington Office on Latin America — a human rights group. Sanchez said the recently elected government of Gustavo Petro, Colombia's first leftist president, has been more willing to collaborate with investigations

into war crimes, including those undertaken by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, a transitional justice system created by the 2016 peace deal.

"This is incredibly important to the victims' families," Sanchez said. "Those family members had to deal with the stigma of supposedly being family members of guerrillas."

According to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, Colombia's military committed at least 6,402 extrajudicial killings between 2002 and 2008, as commanders pressured their troops to provide more results on the battlefield, and placed an emphasis on increasing the number of enemy casualties.

The peace tribunal recently charged a former commander of Colombia's army for the murders of 130 civilians between 2002 and 2003 in Antioquia province. At Tuesday's event, the mothers, sisters, sons and daughters of the 19 victims were invited to speak.

Many carried photos of the victims, and wore t-shirts with their names.

While the relatives thanked Velásquez, the defense minister, for attending the event and issuing an apology, most said they were not ready to forgive. □

Greece wants European Union to sanction countries that refuse deported migrants, minister says

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) —

Greece is urging other European Union member states to adopt a proposed plan to sanction countries that refuse to accept migrants deported by the bloc.

Dimitris Kairidis, the Greek minister for asylum and migration, said existing bilateral agreements for returning migrants between individual EU member states and non-member countries had proved to be ineffective.

"Europe must demand that

these countries take back their citizens. Otherwise, there would be sanctions and no financial aid. Europe has the authority to impose its will on this issue," Kairidis told state television late Tuesday.

He said the sanctions proposal is being discussed in the final stages of negotiations for a new EU-wide overhaul of migration rules. Failure to implement a viable deportation policy, the Greek minister argued, would "make Europe a laughingstock over its asy-

lum process."

Greece and nearby Italy

are currently dealing with a spike in migrant arrivals that has renewed pressure within the EU to finalize the migration deal.

Authorities said 88 migrants from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan — including 20 children — were rescued from a boat in distress Wednesday off the southern Peloponnese region, with the help of a passing oil tanker.



Members of the Frontex, European Border Protection Agency, from Portugal patrol as the sun rises near the northeastern Greek island of Lesbos, on Dec. 8, 2015.

(AP Photo/Santi Palacios, File)

Italy identifies 20 foreign tourists who perished in fiery crash from overpass on Venetian mainland

By C. Barry and G. Zampano
Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Venetian mainlanders stopped in dismay Wednesday to pay respects to the 21 people, all but one foreign tourists, who were killed when an all-electric shuttle bus crashed through an overpass guardrail and fence, plunging more than 10 meters (30 feet) to the ground. The raised road opposite a major train station is one of the borough of Mestre's most frequently traveled, without second thoughts. But they now stopped to inspect the aging guardrail and rusted fence — both of which the bus sliced through in a moment during Tuesday rush-hour traffic. The bus was just a year old, and the 40-year-old driver with an untarnished record had just started his shift shuttling tourists from Piazzale Roma, at the edge of Venice's famed canals, to a four-star campground on the mainland offering bargain accommodation. The driver, Alberto Rizzotto, was among the dead. A video showed the city-owned bus disappear from the frame, as another larger bus traveling behind it continued along the overpass. Prosecutors ruled out contact with any other ve-



A bunch of plastic flowers is seen at the scene of a passenger bus accident in Mestre, near the city of Venice, Italy, Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023. The bus fell from an elevated road, late Tuesday, killing multiple people.

(AP Photo/Antonio Calanni)

hicle, and said the shuttle bus scraped against the guardrail for at least 50 meters (more than 150 feet) before its fiery crash to a surface road. The guardrail was bent to the pavement, and the fence was ripped open. The bus landed upside down, its front end crushed. Fire damage was visible. "Inexplicable," said Mayor Luigi Brugnaro, who has driven on the overpass hundreds of times. Regional

Gov. Luca Zaia said the circumstances suggested the driver may have suddenly become ill.

Investigators hope that video from cameras inside the bus will reveal the reason for the crash. Nine Ukrainians were among the dead tourists, along with four Romanians, three Germans, two Portuguese, one Croat and one South African. The injured included at least four Ukrainians, part of a larger group that includ-

ed a 3-year-old girl who suffered serious burns, as well as visitors from Spain, Austria, France, Croatia and Germany. Nine were being treated in intensive care for trauma, including burns and fractures. Survivors also included a young Austrian brother and sister.

"They are still in what we call the shock phase, with confused memories. They are still in that state of agitation and confusion typical of the traumatic event,"

said Rita Lorio, a psychologist at Mestre's main hospital, one of five treating the injured. "They are not yet in that phase of awareness of what happened."

The tourists are all believed to have stayed at the Hu Venezia Camping in Town, just a 15-minute drive from shuttle bus's pickup point at Piazzale Roma, at the edge of Venice's famed canals linked to the mainland by a bridge.

The crash has shocked Venetians, two-thirds of whom live on the mainland. Many stopped on Wednesday morning to pay their respects, staring at the gaping guardrail and fence. One man stopped on his motorcycle to tie plastic flowers to a post.

Gianni Amadeo, an 80-year-old retired musician, stopped in disbelief Wednesday at the site that he passes regularly between his home and a garage he uses for storage.

"It took a scary flight," he said of the bus's plunge.

Family members of the dead and survivors were trickling in to Venice from around Europe on Wednesday. The Veneto region declared three days of mourning, and flags were flown at half-staff at government buildings. □



Prime Minister of Haiti Ariel Henry, left, greets Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Alfred Nganga Mutua, right, before United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken addresses diplomats during a meeting on the security situation in Haiti in New York on Friday, Sept. 22, 2023.

(Bing Guan/Pool Photo via AP)

By Evelyne Musambi
Associated Press
NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenya's foreign affairs minister

was moved to the tourism post Wednesday as part of a Cabinet reshuffle just days after the official said

Kenya's foreign minister reassigned days after touchy comment on country's police mission in Haiti

the country's police in the Kenya-led Haiti peacekeeping mission would be deployed "within a short time."

Alfred Mutua's statement came shortly after the U.N. Security Council approved the force Monday and was issued before President William Ruto's statement. The president did not mention when the deployment would take place.

Kenya has committed to leading a multinational force to combat gang violence in Haiti, a plan that

has been controversial locally and internationally.

As foreign minister, Mutua was vocal about the Haiti mission, giving prospective deployment times and preparations that are underway. His counterpart in the interior security ministry, where policing issues fall, has been quiet about the deployment.

Ruto reassigned Mutua to the tourism ministry and handed the foreign affairs post to politician Musalia Mudavadi. No changes were made in the defense

and interior security ministries, which are critical in the Haiti mission.

Another notable change is the reassigned of the trade and investment minister Moses Kuria, who was conspicuously missing when the president signed trade deals on the sidelines of the recently concluded U.N. General Assembly meeting. Kuria will now serve in the public service docket. The president has recently cracked down on government spending and foreign travel by officials. □

Visit the island's hidden natural pools



(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two “hidden” natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known “Cura di Turtuga (Turtle’s Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you’re up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to

enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you’ve completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely



no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hidden there. Because it's still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won't be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other.

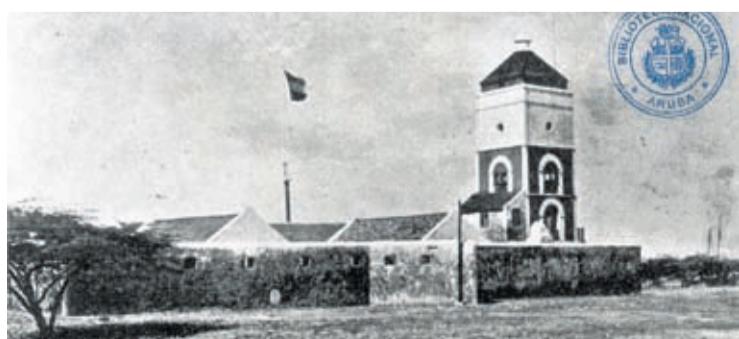
Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you'll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder.□

Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours

Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building “Cocolishi”, is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.



When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called “Willem III Toren”. Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Wil-

lem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower. The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era). Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps



office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is. Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offer-

ing a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.□

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.



Papillon: The butterfly effect of magnificent food



PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film "Papillon" starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island's example where 'life imitates art.' The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

"We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget," says owner Tina. As our special guest you can choose to dine inside our heartwarming airconditioned restaurant or we also offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with great ambiance of the surroundings. Perfect setting for an enjoyable time people watching while sipping on a delicious cocktail.

Fresh oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want something special, a different flow than the usual, then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis from Holland, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière

flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Let the music play!

Another reason to visit us is our Live Entertainment Schedule all through the week.

Get all cozy and warmed up on Sundays and Mondays by Marisella and her enchanting acoustic tunes accompanied by percussion only.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Jairo will give you a real Saxophone treat while on Wednesday you can sit back, relax and enjoy your dinner while DJ Jason brings you the most smooth jazz and lounge music for a dreamy night.

The musicians interact with the guests & requests can be sent in.

The live tunes definitely add to the experience.

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are set up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. "We offer vegan choices that are really good and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too". What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit



to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Chef's Garden 6 course dinner by Papillon

Our one of a kind executive chef Juan Ludena gets extra creative outside the kitchen of Papillon Restaurant. Serving a 6 course surprise menu featuring his International flavors and creativity with refined dishes, chef Juan Ludena is determined to give you a night to remember. Wine pairing is optional. The chef's secret garden is located in a local replica of the Aruba traditional 'cunucu' house. The tropical garden is the setting for a magical in-home private dinning experience.

For more information about this magnificent option, please send us an email or ask our wait staff.

Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels.

Make your reservation today at:

info@papillonaruba.com

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Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure to recognize Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. These Distinguished Visitors were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10+ years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20+ years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35+ years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors Mr. Ronald & Mrs. Kathleen Greiner from Ohio,

United States

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort bestowed the distinguished Visitor certificate to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, and as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by Mr. & Mrs. Greiner were:

"Aruba's Bucuti Resort is the best"
Aruba's warm and friendly people who became like family
Aruba's beaches
Aruba's year-round sunny weather
"Paco, Bucuti's family parrot!"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mr. & Mrs. Greiner for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (in-

Aruba to me

cluding your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Joanne and James Vilardi who are visiting from South Carolina.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is delightful. From South Carolina are celebrating our 40th Wedding Anniversary and 40 years celebrating our anniversary in Aruba. We first came on our honeymoon in 1983 and visited every

year since. Best decision we were blessed to be able to make. We love Aruba now and always.

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!

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Episode LX (60): Maish grandi; Big corn or Zea mays



ORANJESTAD — Corn as we know it today would not exist if it weren't for the Amerindian botanists or expert agro engineers that cultivated and developed many crops including corn. It is a human creation, a plant that does not exist naturally in the wild and will not survive without human attention, it can only survive if planted and protected by humans.

The greatest surprise, and the source of much past controversy in corn archeology, was the identification of the corn's ancestor.

Many botanists did not see any connection between corn and other living plants. Some concluded that the crop plant arose through the domestication by early agriculturalists of wild corn that was now extinct, or at least undiscovered.

About 10,000 years ago, Mesoamerican man found that he could make hybrids with a conical grass, made up of various grains, and that was born in the wild: teosinte (which in Nahuatl means grain of God). Since then, he began to grow this seed, choosing the best

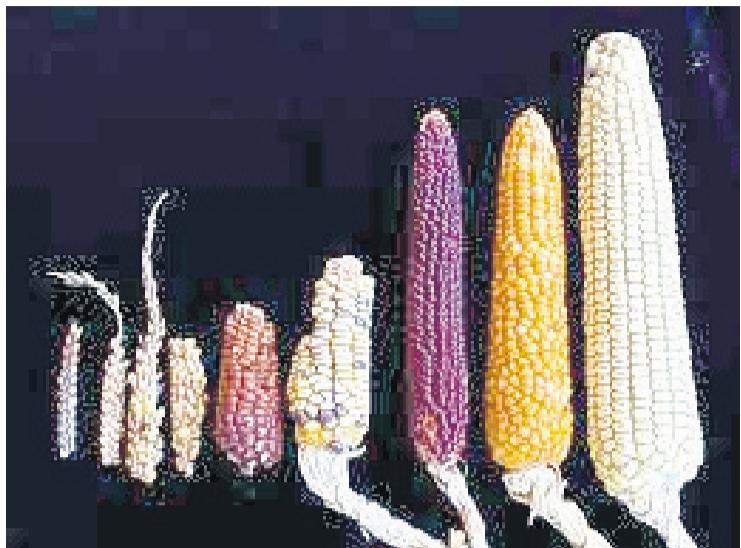
grains and generating hybrids, so corn was born.

The oldest vestiges of domesticated corn were found in Mexico and are 8,700 B.C.

The teosinte currently continues to live in Mexico wild along streams and slopes. There are many types; maize is believed to come from the Zea. mays ssp type. Parviflora that grows in the southwest of the country and is the most similar, in genetic structure, to corn.

The most impressive aspect of the maize story is what it tells us about the capabilities of agriculturalists 9,000 years ago. These people were living in small groups and shifting their settlements seasonally. Yet they were able to transform a grass with many inconvenient, unwanted features into a high-yielding, easily harvested food crop. The domestication process must have occurred in many stages over a considerable length of time as many different, independent characteristics of the plant were modified.

From Mexico maize spread north into the Southwestern United States and south down the coast to Peru and Argentina. About 1000 years ago, as Native American people migrated north to the eastern woodlands



of present day North America, they brought corn with them.

When Europeans like Columbus made contact with people were living in the Caribbean, North and South America, corn was a major part of the diet of most native people. When Columbus "discovered" America, he also discovered corn. But up to this time, people living in Europe did not know about corn.

The first Thanksgiving was held in 1621. While sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie were not on the menu, however Indian corn certainly would have been.

For Aruba corn was of vital importance and the most important crop followed by yuca, beans squashes and peanuts. Corn was sacred for the Caquetío and respected the whole plant as their creator as the mother food and venerated with the most respect. Beside pollen and ceramic buren's, ancient agro ceramic cultures of Aruba had left their native milling stones or Metate's

and also known as cuide's, testimony of the presence of maize. This abundance of food gave time to master many arts of ceramics expressions and an enormous array of crafts and techniques.

The cultivation of corn brought a whole new era and progress to Amerindian societies all over the continent. Yes, to those who cultivated corn successfully, including those on islands and mountains side. All These Amerindians group claims that their flesh and bones are made out of Corn, of Maish or Zea mays. That is how important this wonder plant is for them. □

To immerse in what Aruba is all about, its people, its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session which has been entertaining curious, scientist and bohemians for decades. Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.



Article by: Etnia Nativia

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Etnia Nativia is close to the high rise hotels



National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the island's past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok.



National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights,

adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is an adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

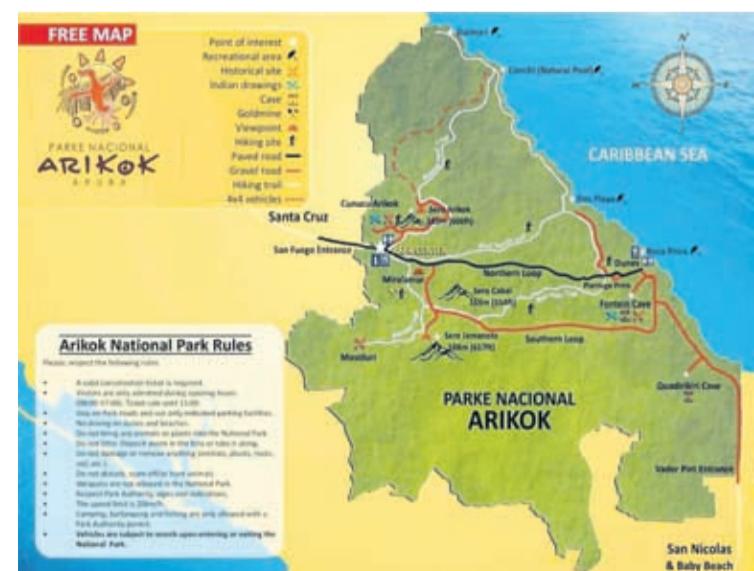
There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agri-

adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



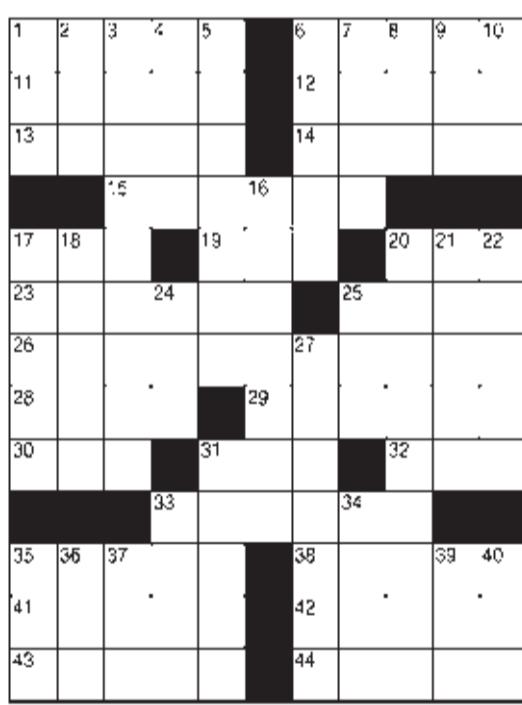
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Wine barrels
- 6 Form
- 11 Little hooter
- 12 West Point student
- 13 Plow pioneer John
- 14 UV stopper
- 15 Make possible
- 17 Music booster
- 19 Fuming
- 20 Relaxing resort
- 23 Fresh face, say
- 25 Action star Jackie
- 26 Tiring climb
- 28 Vaccine type
- 29 Fall back
- 30 Neither follower
- 31 Torment
- 32 Spot to jot
- 33 Like some arguments
- 35 Writer P.D.
- 38 Take as one's own
- 41 Up in the air
- 42 Chad neighbor
- 43 Prison problems
- 44 Irritable

ROSIN	FLIP
APPLE	FIONA
SHALE	INCUR
PENS	PLEASE
ELI	TIM LED
DISTRESS	
AHOY	EIRE
MISTRESS	
DAD	NUS ACE
ORANGE	PLAN
ROMEO	KAPPA
IMEAN	EGRET
CAST	GOOSE

Yesterday's answer

10-5

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

10-5

CRYPTOQUOTE

P J A R S Y A R P F J B D O U R S J

R W G C J N R S D R L O N Z Q R P P S J

K R S H O I Z S J S D R C Y K D S O Q L

K R S H O I Z S J E D J F J B O N R.

— V R Q Q Y X R N C J G R M
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IN WAKING A TIGER,
USE A LONG STICK. — MAO ZEDONG

Google packs more artificial intelligence into new Pixel phones, raises prices for devices by \$100



This image provided by Google shows the new Google Pixel 8 Pro smartphone.

(Google via AP)

By Michael Liedtke
Associated Press

(AP) - Google on Wednesday unveiled a next-generation Pixel smartphones lineup that will be infused with more artificial intelligence tools capable of writing captions about photos that can also be altered by the technology. The injection of more artificial intelligence, or AI, into Google's products marks another step toward bringing more of the technology into the mainstream — a push company executives signaled they were embarking upon during their annual developer's conference five months ago. "Our focus is on making AI more helpful for everyone in a way that is bold and responsible," Rick Osterloh, Google's senior vice president of devices and services, said during Wednesday's event held in New York. As if to leave no doubt about Google's current priorities, Osterloh described the new Pixel 8 and Pixel 8 Pro phones as

a conduit for having "AI in your hand."

The next moves will include allowing the 7-year-old Google Assistant to tap into the company's recently hatched AI chatbot, Bard, to perform tasks. The expanded access to Bard comes just two weeks after Google began connecting the AI chatbot to the company's other popular service such as Gmail, Maps and YouTube.

Google is leaving it up to each user to decide whether to allow Bard to interact with its other services, an effort to address worries about AI sifting through potentially sensitive information as it seeks to learn more about language and people.

One of the new tricks that the Bard-backed assistant is supposed to be able to do is scan a photo taken on a phone powered by Google's Android software and generate a pithy caption suitable for posting on social media. As Google has been doing with most

of its AI gambits, the Bard-backed Google Assistant initially will only be available to a test audience before it is gradually offered on an opt-in basis to more owners of the latest Pixels.

As has become common across the industry, most of the other technology in the Pixel 8 and Pixel 8 Pro phones unveiled Wednesday will be similar to what has already been available in last year's models.

One of the main selling points of the new phones will be improved cameras, including more AI-empowered editing tools that will mostly be available on the Pixel 8 Pro. The AI features will be able to spruce up photos, zoom into certain parts of images, substitute faces taken from other pictures in group shots and erase objects and people from images.

Google is counting on the new AI twists added to this year's lineup to be enough to justify a price increase — with the starting prices for both the Pixel 8 and Pixel 8 Pro increasing by \$100 over last year's comparable models.

That will result in the Pixel 8 selling for \$700 and the Pixel 8 Pro for \$1,000 when they go on sale in stores next week. Apple also raised the starting price of its top-end iPhone by \$100 when its latest models came out last month, signaling inflationary pressures are starting to drive up the costs of devices that have become essential pieces of modern life.

The Pixel 8 Pro will also be able to take people's temperatures — an addition that could be a drawing card in a post-pandemic era as various strains of COVID evolve. But Google is still trying to get regulatory approval to enable that capability in the U.S. A 2020 phone, the Honor Play 4 Pro made by Huawei, also was able to screen for fevers, so Google isn't breaking totally new ground. □

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South Asia is expected to grow by nearly 6% this year, making it the world's fastest-growing region



Franziska Ohnsorge, World Bank Chief Economist for South Asia, speaks during the release the October 2023 development updates for India and South Asia, in New Delhi, India, Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023.

(AP Photo/Altaf Qadri)

By Krutika Pathi
Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) —

South Asia is expected to grow by 5.8% this year, making it the fastest-growing region in the world even as the pace remains below pre-pandemic levels, the World Bank said on Tuesday.

The latest South Asia Development Update from the World Bank projected growth in the region to slow slightly to 5.6% in 2024 and 2025, as post-pandemic rebounds fade and reduced global demand weighs on economic activity.

At almost 6% this year, the region is growing faster than all other emerging markets, said Franziska Ohnsorge, the organization's chief economist for South Asia.

"While high inflation and interest rates have bogged down many emerging markets, South Asia seems

to be forging ahead," the World Bank noted in its report.

Still, "for all of the countries here this represents a slowdown from pre-pandemic levels," Ohnsorge said, adding that the growth wasn't fast enough to meet various development goals set by countries in the region.

Despite the progress, the region still has a long way to go, the report said. Per capita incomes in South Asia are around \$2,000 — one-fifth of the level in East Asia and the Pacific region. The current growth rates, while high, are not sufficient for South Asian nations to achieve high-income status within a generation, it said. Additionally, the growth is not necessarily equal.

India, which accounts for most of the regional economy, is set to remain robust

with 6.3% growth in the 2023-24 fiscal year, while others like Maldives and Nepal are also expected to grow thanks to a rebound in tourism.

But things are bleaker in other countries. Bangladesh's growth may slow to 5.6%, while projections for Pakistan's growth —only 1.7% — are below the rate of its population growth, the World Bank said. Sri Lanka, whose economy collapsed last year, is recovering slowly from a severe recession, but the IMF last week held off from releasing a second tranche of a funding package after concluding that the country had failed to make enough progress in economic reforms.

The World Bank said another concern was that government debt in South Asian countries averaged 86% of GDP in 2022, which is higher than other emerging markets. It added the high debt could increase

the risk of defaults and raise borrowing costs. □

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217065

Suspect charged in rapper Tupac Shakur's fatal shooting makes first court appearance in Las Vegas

By Rio Yamat and Ken Ritter
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A self-described gangster who police and prosecutors say masterminded the shooting death of Tupac Shakur in Las Vegas in 1996 made his first court appearance Wednesday on a murder charge.

Duane "Keffe D" Davis, 60, stood shackled, wearing a dark-blue jail uniform and plastic orange slippers. He was scheduled to be arraigned on the charge Wednesday, but the hearing was cut short after he asked Judge Tierra Jones to postpone the hearing while he retains counsel in Las Vegas. Jones rescheduled the arraignment for Oct. 19.

"Law enforcement hasn't cared for a long time," Mopreme Shakur, Tupac Shakur's stepbrother, told The Associated Press over Zoom from his home in Los Angeles. "Young Black men often deal with delayed justice because we're often viewed as the criminals. So justice has been delayed for quite some time — in spite of all the eyes, all the attention, despite the celebrity of my brother."

"It's already been 27 years and then the legal process, so-called wheels of justice, moves historically slow," he said. Davis was arrested



Duane "Keffe D" Davis is led into the courtroom at the Regional Justice Center on Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, in Las Vegas.

(Bizuayehu Tesfaye/Las Vegas Review-Journal via AP, Pool)

last week near his home in suburban Henderson. A few hours after his arrest last Friday a grand jury indictment was unsealed in Clark County District Court charging him with murder. Grand jurors also voted to add sentencing enhancements for the use of a deadly weapon and alleged gang activity. If Davis is convicted, that could add decades to his sentence. Los Angeles-based attorney Edi Faal told the AP in a brief phone call

after the hearing that he is Davis' longtime personal attorney and is helping him find a Nevada lawyer. "I have worked with him for more than two decades," Faal said. "But at this point I do not have a comment." Davis denied a request from the AP for an interview from jail where he's being held without bond.

Davis had been a long-known suspect in the case, and publicly admitted his role in the killing in interviews ahead of his 2019

tell-all memoir, "Compton Street Legend."

"There's one thing that's for sure when living that gangster lifestyle," he wrote. "You already know that the stuff you put out is going to come back; you never know how or when, but there's never a doubt that it's coming."

Davis' own comments revived the police investigation that led to the indictment, police and prosecutors said. In mid-July, Las Vegas police raided Davis'

home, drawing renewed attention to one of hip-hop music's most enduring mysteries. Prosecutors allege Shakur's killing stemmed from a rivalry and competition for dominance in a musical genre that, at the time, was dubbed "gangsta rap." It pitted East Coast members of a Bloods gang sect associated with rap music mogul Marion "Suge" Knight against West Coast members of a Crips sect that Davis has said he led in Compton, California. Tension escalated in Las Vegas the night of Sept. 7, 1996, when a brawl broke out between Shakur and Davis' nephew, Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson, at the MGM Grand hotel-casino following a heavyweight championship boxing match won by Mike Tyson.

Knight and Shakur went to the fight, as did members of the South Side Crips," prosecutor Marc DiGiacomo said last week in court. "And (Knight) brought his entourage, which involved Mob Piru gang members." After the casino brawl, Knight drove a BMW with Shakur in the front passenger seat. The car was stopped at a red light near the Las Vegas Strip when a white Cadillac pulled up on the passenger side and gunfire erupted. □



Julia Ormond, a cast member in the television series "Incorporated," arrives at the NBCUniversal Television Critics Association summer press tour on Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2016, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

(Photo by Rich Fury/Invision/AP, File)

By D. Hajela and A. Dalton

NEW YORK (AP) — Julia Ormond, who starred in films alongside the likes of Brad

Pitt and Harrison Ford in the 1990s before her spotlight faded, filed a lawsuit Wednesday accusing dis-

Julia Ormond sues Harvey Weinstein saying he assaulted her; accuses CAA, Disney, Miramax of enabling

graced movie producer Harvey Weinstein of sexually assaulting her in 1995 and then hindering her career. Ormond, who also accuses The Walt Disney Co., Miramax and her former agents of knowing Weinstein was a problem but doing nothing about it, filed the case in state Supreme Court in Manhattan under the Adult Survivors Act, a law passed last year that allows a temporary window for those who allege sexual assault

to file past the state's normal deadlines.

In her suit, Ormond says she was a star on the rise when she met Weinstein in 1994. She says she kept in touch with him to discuss scripts and projects, and in 1995 entered into a production agreement with Miramax, where he was co-chairman. She accuses him of committing sexual battery against her in December 1995 after a business meeting, and then retaliating

against her and negatively affecting her career after she confronted him weeks later. The British actress says she told her U.S. agents at the time, Creative Artists Agency, but received no support and was advised not to take any legal action or other steps. She accuses CAA, Disney and Miramax, saying that they knew Weinstein presented a danger to women but did nothing to stop him or to help her. □

2030 World Cup set to be hosted by Spain-Portugal-Morocco with 3 South American countries added

By Graham Dunbar
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The 2030 men's soccer World Cup is set to feature games in six countries on three continents in a unique format that will allow the tournament to celebrate its 100th anniversary in Uruguay. FIFA reached an agreement Wednesday between soccer's continental leaders to accept a bid spearheaded by co-hosts Spain, Portugal and Morocco as the only candidate for the hosting rights. The agreement also includes staging games in South American countries Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, which had earlier promoted a rival co-hosting bid.

Those three countries will each host one match to start the tournament, which allows FIFA to stage the opening game in the Uruguayan capital of Montevideo, where the Centenario Stadium hosted the inaugural 1930 World Cup final. The bid had started out as a joint venture between Spain and Portugal before



Paraguay's Soccer Association President Robert Harrison, left, FIFA delegate Ignacio Alonso, center, Conmebol President Alejandro Dominguez, third from left, and Conmebol Vice President Claudio Tapia stand after announcing host countries for the World Cup soccer tournament in Luque, Paraguay, Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023.

(AP Photo/Jorge Saenz)

expanding to include Morocco, in northern Africa, earlier this year. All six host nations will get automatic entry to the 48-team tournament, FIFA said. It is the first time the World Cup will be played

on more than one continent.

The consensus reached by the continental soccer bodies also allowed FIFA to open bidding for the 2034 World Cup, with only member federations from Asia

and Oceania eligible to bid for the hosting rights. Saudi Arabia immediately entered that contest and Australia is also interested after successfully co-hosting the Women's World Cup this year with New Zealand. Either way, the 2034 tournament will almost certainly be played in November and December — like last year's World Cup in Qatar, in the heart of the European club soccer season. Accelerating the choice of a 2034 host to the end of next year will be widely seen as a victory for Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has built close ties to FIFA president Gianni Infantino in the past six years.

The FIFA Council's acceptance of a unified 2030 candidacy still needs formal approval next year at a meeting of the 211 member federations. That should be just a formality. The 2034 pick will be made at a separate congress, FIFA said. The 48-team tournament scheduled for June-July 2030 is set to start in Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay — which FIFA branded as "Centenary Celebration Matches" — before the action moves to the core host nations Spain, Portugal and Morocco. □

US appeals court hears arguments over 2010 hush-money settlement of Ronaldo rape case in Vegas

By K. Ritter and Scott Sonner
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A United States appeals court didn't immediately issue a ruling after listening to arguments on Wednesday from lawyers trying to revive a woman's bid to force international soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo to pay millions more than the \$375,000 in hush money he paid her after she accused him of raping her in Las Vegas in 2009. An attorney for the woman is asking the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn the dismissal of the case in June 2022 and reopen the civil lawsuit she first filed in Nevada in 2018. The appeal argues the federal court judge in Nevada erred in repeatedly rejecting the woman's attempts to unseal and include as

evidence the confidentiality agreement she signed in 2010 in accepting payments from Ronaldo.

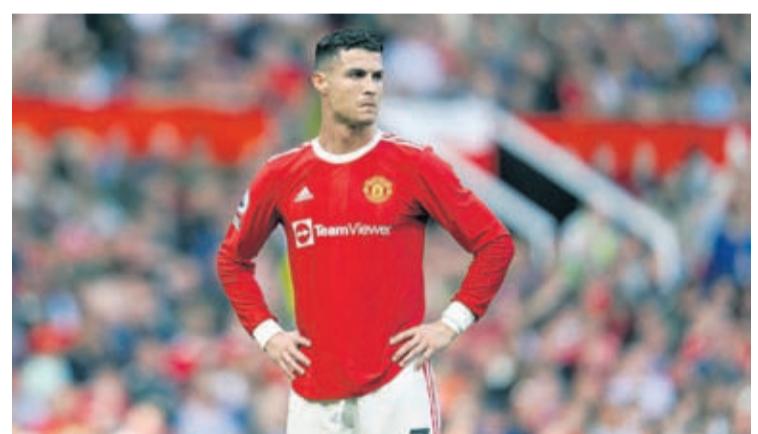
Judge Johnnie Rawlinson declared the three-judge panel of the San Francisco-based appellate court in recess and said they would consider the appeal as submitted following about 45 minutes of oral arguments Wednesday from lawyers for Ronaldo and his accuser, Kathryn Mayorga. The Associated Press generally does not name people who say they are victims of sexual assault, but Mayorga gave consent through her lawyers, including Leslie Mark Stovall, to make her name public.

It wasn't immediately clear when the court would rule. A ruling likely is at least weeks and possibly months

away.

Ronaldo is one of the most recognizable and richest athletes in the world. He leads his home country Portugal's national team and has played for the Spanish team Real Madrid, the Italian club Juventus, Manchester United in England and now plays for the Saudi Arabian professional team Al Nassr.

Ninth Circuit Judges Rawlinson, John Owens and 5th Circuit Judge Sidney Fitzwater visiting from Texas each asked questions of the lawyers — many targeting leaked documents tied to the confidentiality agreement — during the special sitting of the appellate court held Wednesday at the law school on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.



Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo stands on the pitch during the team's English Premier League soccer match against Norwich City on April 16, 2022, in Manchester, England.

(AP Photo/Jon Super, File)

Las Vegas police reopened a rape investigation after Mayorga's lawsuit was filed, but Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson decided in 2019 not to pursue criminal charges. He said too much time had passed and evidence failed to show that Mayorga's ac-

cusation could be proved to a jury.

Ronaldo, through his lawyers, maintained the sex was consensual. The two reached a confidentiality agreement in 2010 under which Stovall acknowledged that Mayorga received \$375,000. □



Philadelphia 76ers guard James Harden (1) calls to teammates during the first half of Game 5 against the Boston Celtics in the NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinals playoff series, Tuesday, May 9, 2023, in Boston.

(AP Photo/Charles Krupa, File)

By Pat Graham
Associated Press

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP)

— James Harden returned

to the Philadelphia 76ers on Wednesday, as the disgruntled guard who had been seeking a trade in-

stead joined his teammates as an active participant at training camp. The 10-time All-Star arrived

James Harden returns to Philadelphia 76ers' training camp despite trade request

on the Colorado State campus for practice in spite of a fractured relationship with the Sixers' front office. He skipped the team's media day in New Jersey on Monday and the first day of camp in Colorado on Tuesday.

Harden in June picked up his \$35.6 million contract option for this season with the belief the team would try to trade him. He blasted team president Daryl Morey at a promotional event in China when no trade materialized, calling Morey a liar. The 76ers are conducting workouts this week at Moby Arena, which is the home of the Rams' bas-

ketball team. The Sixers are venturing out in the area, too. Joel Embiid and teammates recently made a trip to nearby Boulder for dinner and a chat session with Colorado Buffaloes football coach and NFL Hall of Famer Deion Sanders.

Sanders discussed topics such as pressure, unity, being in the moment and what it's like to go from a historically Black college or university in Jackson State to a struggling program at Colorado that was coming off a 1-11 season. The Buffaloes (3-2) remain the talk of college football.

David Adelman, one of the Sixers' owners, said before the meal that new coach Nick Nurse requested the Colorado excursion to squeeze in some training at elevation. The Nuggets won their first NBA title in franchise history by beating Miami in five games last June. "The road to a championship for the NBA goes through Denver," Adelman said shortly after the team met Sanders. "We're going to get used to it because you'll see us here in June." Nurse is taking over for Doc Rivers, who never led the Sixers past the second round of the playoffs.

The team returns the reigning NBA MVP in Embiid. To bolster its roster, Philly added guard Patrick Beverley and center Mo Bamba. The team also brought in veteran Danny Green.

"You added some pieces. And you add some pieces that you feel should be the difference," Sanders said to the Sixers at dinner. "Straight up, you guys really look at each other and hold each other accountable and you have to realize, how bad do you really want it? What are you willing to do for it? What are you willing to sacrifice for it, and how far are you willing to go for it? How hard are you willing to work for it?"

"You all are among the best in the business, right? But you've got to put it together." □

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